

## The Sunday School

### LESSON FOR JULY 24

BY THE EDITOR

Elijah's Flight and Encouragement.—I King 19: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.—Psalm 37: 7.

LESSON THOUGHT.—Yielding to discouragements unfits us for life's work.

#### Home Readings

Elijah's Flight and Encouragement, I Kings 19: 1-18.

A despondent heart, Psalm 55: 1-8.

Cast down, Psalm 42.

The glory of the Lord, Exod. 33: 12-23.

The refuge, Psalm 56.

Distress and deliverance, Psalms 120, 121.

#### Introductory Notes

This lesson is full of practical instruction. The events occurred in the latter part of Ahab's reign, three or four years before his death. Persecution had now ceased in the kingdom and the work of reform was gradually going on. The power of God's prophets, Elijah and Elisha was being felt. The case of Ahab, however, was a hopeless one, his utterly depraved character made a reformation next to impossible, and his final doom is already pending.

#### Meaning of the Text

Verse 1. She had been at Jezreel and did not witness the scene at Carmel, or the effect would have been different.

V. 2. She was in a terrible rage when she heard the news. Elijah had wisely remained without the gates of the city. Jezebel may have been afraid to come in contact with this man of God, and gave him this opportunity to escape.

V. 3. Some think the faith of Elijah failed him, and that he deserves censure. This interpretation is hardly allowable. Once he fled from danger by command (18: 1.) Now he flees without command. He need not walk into a den of lions.

V. 4. He went beyond the territory of Judah where Jehosaphat reigned who was closely allied to Ahab (I Kings 22: 4.) His son married the daughter of Jezebel. Elijah was greatly discouraged at the outcome of the scene on Carmel.

V. 5. The prophet needed two things, sleep and food. Nature furnished sleep, God gave him food as he had done before.

V. 6. It was the ordinary food of the desert Arab, and was likely miraculously supplied as before.

V. 7. He had made no preparations for the journey, having started out so suddenly.

V. 8. Horeb, 200 miles distant, the same as Sinai.

V. 9. There may have been reproof in these words, but it was reproof fragrant with love.

V. 10. Every item, but one, in this statement is correct. He was not the only servant left in Israel.

Vs. 11, 12. Elijah had not come out until

the Lord passed by in the "small voice."

V. 13. The design of all this was to teach Elijah that God's work was going on in the land, in spite of the wild doings of Ahab and Jezebel.

Vs. 14, 15. We do not learn in scripture that this man became king, but Elisha subsequently told him that he should (II Kings 8: 13.) Elijah had the assurance that Baal worship should be overthrown in the land. II Kings 8: 28, 29.

V. 16. Jehu was to destroy the house of Ahab, which he did. II Kings chapters 9 and 10. Elisha's call and appointment is given in I Kings 19: 19-21. To know that some one would take up his work would encourage Elijah, and enable him to die in peace. "God's workmen die, but the work goes on."

#### The Lesson Applied

1. *Facing Danger.*—Jezebel, that wicked woman was angry when she heard of the result on Carmel. She threatened to take the life of Elijah. The work of reform is not a pleasant task, one is compelled to face danger, suffer persecutions and often death, but it is better to die doing right than to live doing wrong. Satan's hatred is as bitter today as it was in the days of Elijah; his threats are as full of evil as then, tho they may take different forms. Elijah was not a coward for running away as he did. Sometimes it is the truest kind of courage. There come times in every one's life when to flee from danger would be cowardice and treason, but there are other times when it is foolhardiness and wrecklessness to stand in the face of danger. We have no right to throw our lives away uselessly, and only in the cause of duty. Christ taught us this lesson when he refused to throw himself down from the pinnacle. It is the duty of each one to guard his life, for it is something sacred, yet truth is more so, and when it is a matter of sacrificing life or truth, life must be given up.

2. *Discouragements.*—Elijah was sadly disappointed and this led to discouragement. He felt that he had done all he could do, and having failed the result was deep and sad despondency. We need to guard carefully against the spirit of discouragement, we are too apt to go down under its influence. Sunday-school teachers and ministers often lose heart when they see little or no results from their work. This should not be so. It takes away the power for work. Elijah's work was not a failure, tho he may have thought so. The visible results seemed to indicate that, but God did not think so. There are often results we are unable to see for the time at least.

3. *Longing to Die.*—Elijah prayed that he might die. If that prayer had been answered it would have been an inglorious ending of his life. God spared him and he was permitted to see glorious results from the battle he fought on Carmel and which he thought was an utter failure. Life is a sacred trust, a gift from God, and it is wrong to wish ourselves dead. God has a great work for us

and while life lasts our prayer should be for grace to live up to the full measure of our duty and responsibility.

4. *Under the Tree.*—It was there where a blessing came to Elijah. He giveth his beloved sleep. Angels came to him. Under the tree of Calvary is where God's tired and weary souls find peace, real comfort. There angels come with sweet refreshments and gentle ministries. There is food also, food for the hungry soul. When you are despondent, discouraged, in sorrow, in trouble, seek beneath the shadow of the cross, and there you shall find rest for your soul.

#### To Make You Think

1. Who told Jezebel of what had happened on Mount Carmel? 2. What message did she send to Elijah? 3. Why did Jezebel put off the execution of the sentence till tomorrow? 4. Do you think she wanted Elijah to flee as he did? 5. May it not be that she did not want to meet this man of God? 6. Did Elijah do right in fleeing? 7. Do you think it shows a lack of courage? 8. Under what circumstances is it right to flee from danger? 9. How far and when is one justified in saving his life? 10. Did not Christ say that those who save their life shall lose it and those who lose it for his sake shall save it? 11. In what way did God show his kindness to Elijah? 12. How did he cure his despondency? 13. What two things did he do for him before he gave him instruction? 14. Could we not sometimes do more with sinners if we would first show that we care for their bodies by treating them kindly? 15. What lesson does the still "small voice" teach us? 16. What two mistakes did Elijah make? 17. What is the best cure for discouragements?

#### Lesson Points

1. We can not be loyal to God and always keep the favor of the world.
2. There are times when it is our duty to flee from danger. We must carefully distinguish between courage and wrecklessness.
3. We must not needlessly expose ourselves to danger.
4. The Lord wants us to live for him as well as die for him.
5. It may be a greater thing to live for Christ than to die for him.
6. God is very kind and gentle and patient even with his erring children. He gives Elijah sleep and food and then instructs him.
7. There may be many more good people living than we think there are.
8. Angels yet minister to God's children and care for them in time of need.
9. We should guard against yielding to discouragements. It unfits us for the great duties and responsibilities of life.
10. It is the silent influence of our lives, and not the noise we make, that leaves the best and deepest impressions in the world.

#### Helpful Illustrations

*Elijah's prayer not answered.* Suppose God had said, "Well, Elijah, you can die if you want to." They would have buried him